



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NOTE TO ARTICLE III. No. CCIV.

WEST WICKHAM, LONDON,
August 14, 1864.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

GENTLEMEN:—In an able article upon the origin of our notions of Space and Time, contained in your current number, the solution of this problem, proposed by me in a work called the “Analogy of Thought and Nature,” is alluded to in terms conveying an impression so different to that which I at least intended to convey, that I ask the favor of a few lines in your pages to state more clearly my views on this subject. And I do this with the less diffidence, because my solution has a direct bearing upon a question hitherto little considered, but which must, I think, be admitted to be of great importance in metaphysical inquiries, namely, the constructive action of thought.

Your reviewer alleges that I resolve the idea of Space into a “sensuous imagination,” because I have said that “the thought of Space is no sooner formed than it resolves itself into the opposite thoughts of Centre and Circumference.” I allow that my too unguarded employment of these words justifies the criticism, and the more so, that I have not drawn in my book with sufficient clearness the distinction between Space and Motion which I am about to draw here; but I cannot allow that it justly applies to my conceptions as I apprehend them.

Every thought involves an act of *will*,—we will to think. But of what do we think when we thus will? what forms the substance of our thoughts? I reply, *motions*,—either produced directly by the action of our wills, or called forth by sensations or emotions, i. e. agencies independent of our proper wills, by which they are affected. The will to produce motion is a power of which it is impossible to suppose ourselves deprived so long as we retain conscious being. All thoughts not traceable to sensations or emotions are expressions of or reflections upon motions. And all thoughts about our sensations or emotions resolve themselves into the reproduction, rearrangement, or analysis by the aid of language of the motions called forth in us by sensation or emotion. Now, if this be a true account of thought, it cannot be surprising that our first thought, the logical condition of all that follow, is the thought of *that in which motion is possible*,—a thought which, according to the principle of opposition pervading all thought, falls into two great opposites: 1. The thought of Space, that in which *coexistent motions* are possible; 2. The thought of Time, that in which *successive motions* are possible. These opposite conditions unite in the thought

of a *motion willed*, which must be thought of as willed in Space and Time; while each of these falls within itself into a new opposition; — the thought of Space into that of *Centre* and *not Centre*, which unite in the thought of motions emanating from any assumed centre; the thought of Time into the opposition of *Past* and *Future*, which unite in the thought of the present.

The unions thus produced necessarily begin to assume what your reviewer calls a “sensuous image”; the complete absence of such an image belonging solely to the principle of Will, of which we become conscious only by intuition, not by presentation. For since this power acts by determining itself, and every determination is, as Spinoza said, a negation, every such determination must partake of the character of a *thing*, that is, of that which being determined both *qualitatively*, or as to the direction of the motions concerned in its production, and *quantitatively*, or as to their magnitude, may become an object to sense.

But until this double determination has been effected we have only objects of thought, not of sense; though the objects of sense may be used as illustrations, to shadow forth the more subtle conceptions of thought. Thus I justify the use of *Centre* and *Circumference* in reference to Space. God has been said to be a Being who has his centre everywhere and his circumference nowhere. So the *centre* of Space is only the point assumed by the will as the origin of motion, which may be taken anywhere, — and its *circumference* is determined only by the distance to which the motion is willed to extend. There is no true “image” in this thought, because there is no expression either of Quality or Quantity; no particular movement willed, but only an unlimited place for motion: and the word *circumference* is used only to denote that this possibility of motion is thought of as equally possible in all directions.

I am, with much respect, yours,

EDW. VANSITTART NEALE.

[The passage referred to by Mr. Neale is contained in the North American Review for July, 1864, p. 114, and is expressed as follows: — “To a limited extent, E. V. Neale accepts Trendelenburg’s psychological theory (Analogy of Thought and Nature, 1863, pp. 28, 29): ‘As Trendelenburg has shown, . . . all attempts to explain the thought of Space made by the profoundest thinkers either imply the thought of Space, or fall into absurdity. . . . The thought of Space is no sooner formed, than it distinguishes itself into two *opposite* thoughts, that of centre and circumference; which imply, while they deny each other.’ Such a ‘thought of Space’ is clearly a sensuous image of Extension.”]

Nothing could be farther from literary justice, or from our own intention, than to quote an isolated passage from Mr. Neale's work, and wrest it to an interpretation at variance with the general tenor of the context. But, notwithstanding the above explanations, we are constrained to adhere to our former criticism. The passage in question was selected at random as representative of an error pervading the entire work, — an error which is ingrained into its fundamental theory. The distinctions which we endeavored to establish between Space and Extension are everywhere overlooked or neglected in it, especially the distinction between them as to imaginability. Though intended "to shadow forth the more subtle conceptions of thought," all sensuous symbolism of Space inevitably materializes it, and yields only illustrations of Extension. The circle or sphere, with a centre and circumference bearing definite and fixed relations to each other, is inadmissible even as an illustration of absolute and limitless vacuity ; for it determines that which is, on pain of contradiction, indeterminable. A "centre of Space" may be "taken anywhere" ; but, once taken, it is fixed, and conceivable only by the sensuous imagination as an element of a limited, geometrical figure. Such a conception, therefore, far from symbolizing Space, which is a bare, void condition of things, yields only a concrete image of Extension. The idea of Space can be arrived at only by pursuing a very different route.

The error of Mr. Neale is, as we conceive, enveloped in the germinal principle of his theory. Motion, as the *a priori* condition of the "constructive action of thought," upon which he lays so much stress, is logically posterior to the thing moved, and the thing moved is logically posterior to Space and Time, the conditions of things in general. Hence motion is not the first fact, or "substance of our thoughts." Indeed, motion, being a mere predicate, and not a subject, manifestly cannot stand alone at all, as an object of thought. The influence of Trendelenburg is powerfully apparent in Mr. Neale's work ; and both writers confound motion with activity in general. All motion is activity, but all activity is not motion ; activity is a generic term, of which motion, or the activity of matter, and the activity of mind, for which we have no generic name, are the species. Hence to explain all facts, physical and mental, by means of motion alone, evidently materializes philosophy, however unintentionally, and renders the confusion of imagination and pure intellection (and consequently the confusion of Space with Extension) a logical necessity of the procedure. The "constructive action of thought," viewed as the activity of mind representing matter and creating new combinations of it, throws much light upon the nature of the sensuous imagination, and in this respect philosophy owes much

to Trendelenburg and his school; but viewed as *entire* activity of thought, it is only a fragment put for the whole. Mr. Neale's work is ingenious and very suggestive; and, despite a certain want of lucidity caused by deficient analysis, is a valuable contribution to metaphysical literature. Its aim and scope enlist our sympathy and respect; and we trust it is the harbinger of other works.

We are obliged, by the necessity for brevity, to omit further remarks on Mr. Neale's note; but perhaps enough has been said to substantiate our former criticism.]